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ABSTRACT

One of a series of instructional materials produced by the Literacy Council of Alaska, this booklet provides information about motorcycle safety. Using a simplified vocabulary and shorter sentences, it offers statistics concerning motorcycle accidents: information on how to choose the proper machine: basic information about the operation of the machine, what to wear when riding one, and what parts and tools to carry: safety tips for riding on roads and on trails: special tips to follow when carrying a passenger: and suggestions for operating a three-wheeled motorcycle. (FL)

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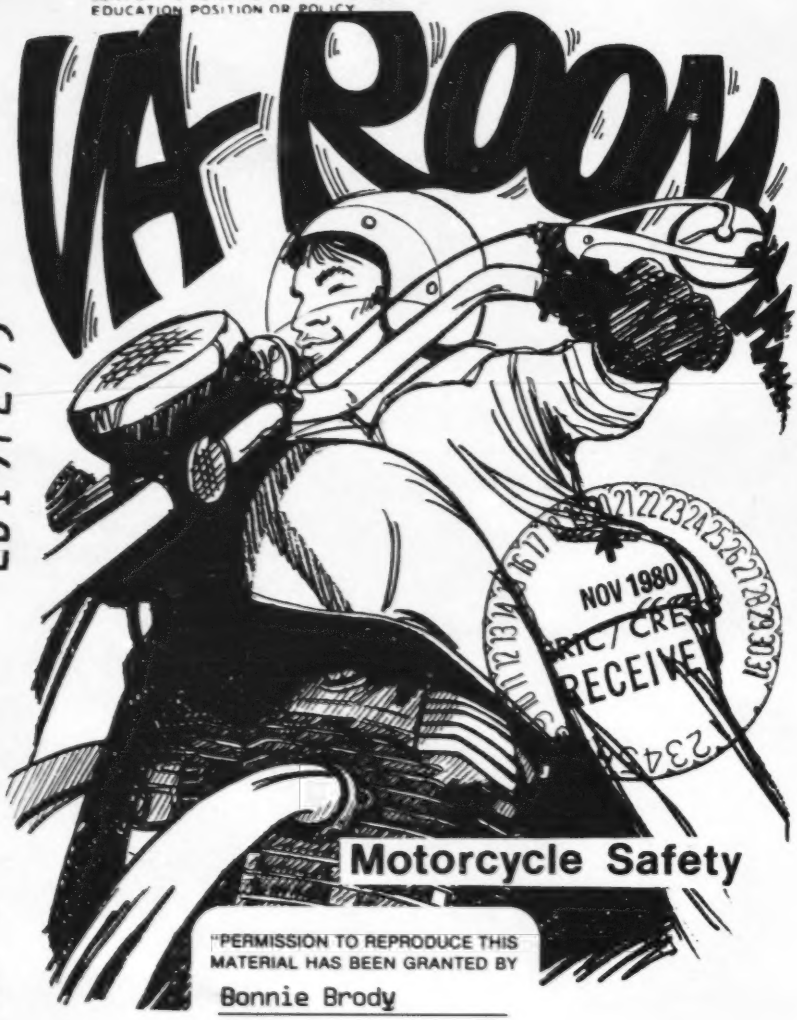

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Motorcycle Safety

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Department of Health and Human Services
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Indian Health Service
Alaska Area Native Health Service

HSA-80-1027

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Hi! I'm Ed. I'd like to talk to you about you and your bike.

Almost everybody dreams of having a motorbike at one time or another. How about you?
Look at that bike. Man, would you like to have one. You can almost feel what it would be like ---
---the wind in your face, the roar of power, the smell of exhaust.
You think of the look on your friends' faces as you start up the engine.
If only you had a bike like that!
If only you could get one!
If only ---
Well, maybe someday you will.

There are two ways of looking at a motorcycle.
Some people think of it as a toy---another gadget. They think that being old enough to ride a motorcycle means you already Know how to ride. They think only of the fun they can have. Sometimes they don't think at all!
Often these people do very foolish--very dangerous things.

SOMETIMES THEY EVEN KILL!

Other people respect the motorcycle, other people and themselves. A motorcycle is a powerful machine. It takes skill and practice to learn to ride a motorcycle just as it takes skill and practice to learn to drive a car. AND IT TAKES STUDY to learn the laws and rules for SAFE riding.

BUT MOST OF ALL...

It takes an ALERT rider who thinks of Safety as a

NATURAL PART OF RIDING!

2.

"Man, if I ever get a bike I'm going to do wheelies from one end of this village to the other!"

"There's not much traffic here - not like in Anchorage or Fairbanks. I don't see why we have to follow the same rules."

You've heard people say things like this. Well, the question I always ask is -

"CAN YOU DO WITHOUT A FOOT? OR A LEG? CAN YOU DO WITHOUT YOUR BRAIN? CAN YOU THINK WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO KILL SOMEONE OR CRIPPLE THEM?"

A lot of times people don't want to think about these things. They say "Aw, that can't happen to me."

I imagine that's what a 14 year old friend of mine thought before he lost his foot in a stupid accident. And the man from the upper Yukon who broke his neck and was paralyzed from there down for the rest of his life.

IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU - AND ME. THAT'S WHY I SAY ... BE AN EXPERT, NOT A FOOL.

If you want to impress your friends - impress them with your calm, steady skills. Impress them with your respect for both people and machines. Impress them with the care you take of your bike and of

OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AND PROPERTY!

BUT MOST OF ALL - Impress them with your skill in riding.

BE A HERO TO YOURSELF...

AND STAY IN ONE PIECE

AND -

BE A HERO TO OTHERS...

BY THINKING OF THEIR SAFETY.

3

Did you know....

IN ALASKA-

1 of every 5 motorcycle drivers is less than 21 years old.

This group of drivers is involved in more than 1/2 of ALL motorcycle accidents.

This means—

- more than ½ of all motorcycle deaths.
- more than ½ of all motorcycle injuries.

MANY OF THESE ACCIDENTS AND DEATHS ARE ALCOHOL OR DRUG RELATED!

Drinking.... Drugs.... and Motorcycles DON'T MIX.

Don't be a FOOL. If you have been drinking or doing dope,

DON'T GO OUT AND KILL SOMEONE WITH YOUR MOTORCYCLE!

4.

How can you get the most enjoyment out of a motorbike – and not cause a lot of dangerous risk and worry?

The answer is simple – **THINK SAFETY!**

Spend time learning safe and proper ways of good riding. Take time to find out all about how the motorbike works.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS. Ask someone who knows a lot about motorbikes... someone who uses his or her head when riding.

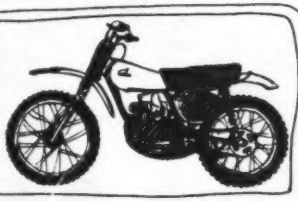
HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU ARE GETTING A MOTORBIKE.

THEN TALK THEM OVER WITH AN EXPERT.

MOTORBIKES COST A LOT!

It is important that you stop and ask these questions before you buy one:

1. Where will you be riding? Will you need a street bike for riding on pavement? Or will you need a trail bike for riding mostly on dirt roads and trails?



2. What size is best for you? How tall are you? How strong? A motorbike is like clothes. It has to fit the rider in a way to be comfortable.

3. What is your riding ability? Are you a beginner? Or have you been riding for years?

4. What kind of riding do you want to do? Will your bike be used just for transportation from place to place? Will you be racing? Riding on rough trails?

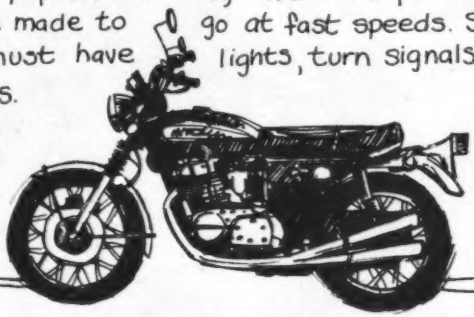
5. Will you want to carry passengers?

6. How much do you want to pay?

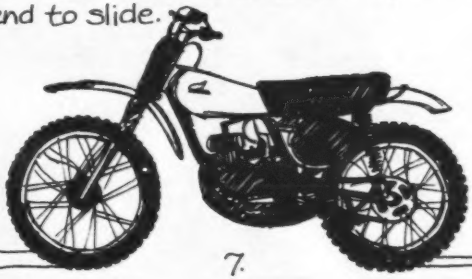
6

The type of motorcycle most people use in the villages is a "dirt bike" or trail bike. These motorbikes are made for riding on trails and dirt roads.

Street bikes are motorcycles made with tires that grip pavement. They have more powerful brakes and are made to go at fast speeds. Street bikes must have lights, turn signals, and mirrors.



Trail bikes have special shock absorbers to go on rough ground. They have Knobby tires for good traction. The brakes are not as powerful so the wheels won't lock in loose dirt. Trail bikes **DO NOT HOLD A PAVED ROAD WELL.** They tend to slide.

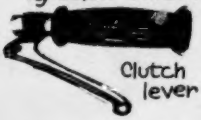


7.

WHEN YOU GET YOUR BIKE...

Instrument cluster and ignition switch

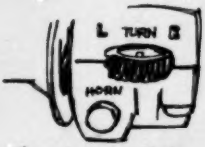
Light switch and dimmer switch



Clutch lever

First - learn about the motorcycle itself.
Where are the controls?
What are the names of the important parts?
What can your bike do?
What can it **NOT** do?
Learn all these things so that working your bike becomes second nature to you.

Kick starter



Turn signal switch and horn button

Engine cut-off switch and electric starter button

THIS MEANS INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE...

THERE IS NO SAFE SHORTCUT!!!

Go over your owner's manual.

READ IT ALL BEFORE YOU RIDE!!

8.

RIDING THE MOTORCYCLE

What to wear -

helmet of the proper size - with eye protection

gloves

boots

jacket and pants

It takes skill in riding a motorcycle to avoid a crash. The clothes you wear while riding are to protect you against the cold, wind and dust. But accidents do happen. If you are wearing the proper clothing, it may keep you from getting badly hurt.

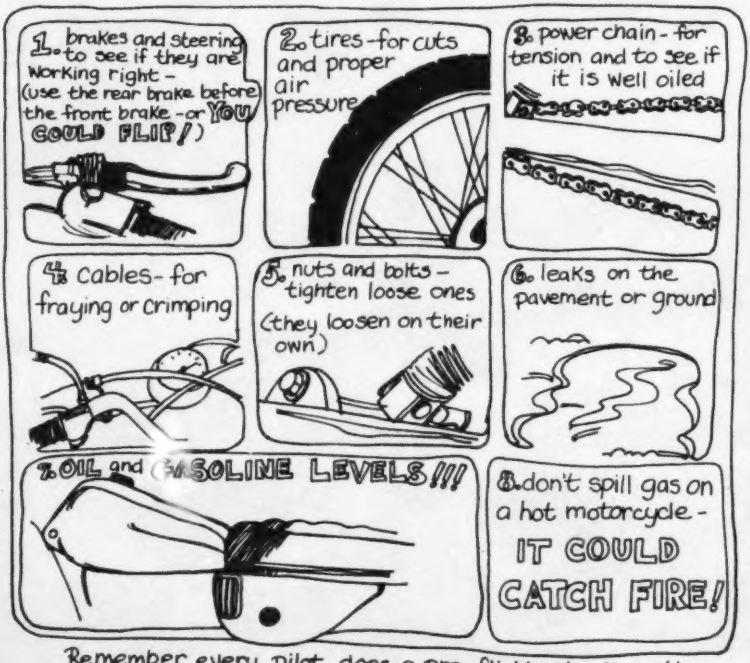
In Alaska, you have to think about the "wind chill factor." On a day that is only cool enough for a light jacket when you are walking around, you could get chilled on a motorcycle. When you begin to shake with cold (hypothermia) you have less control of your bike. You must remember to dress for the temperature indicated on a wind chill factor chart.

REMEMBER IT'S THE LAW IN ALASKA drivers under 19 and all passengers MUST WEAR A HELMET!

KNOW ALL YOU CAN ABOUT THE MOTORCYCLE YOU WILL BE RIDING

Every motorcycle is different. Before you ever ride, find out all you can about the controls of your motorcycle. You must learn to operate the controls by touch alone. You will not have time to **LOOK** for controls while riding.

Then, before you start out. **EACH TIME** before you start out **CHECK**:


1. brakes and steering - to see if they are working right - (use the rear brake before the front brake - or YOU COULD FLIP!)
2. tires - for cuts and proper air pressure
3. power chain - for tension and to see if it is well oiled
4. Cables - for fraying or crimping
5. nuts and bolts - tighten loose ones (they loosen on their own)
6. leaks on the pavement or ground
7. OIL and GASOLINE LEVELS!!!
8. don't spill gas on a hot motorcycle - IT COULD CATCH FIRE!

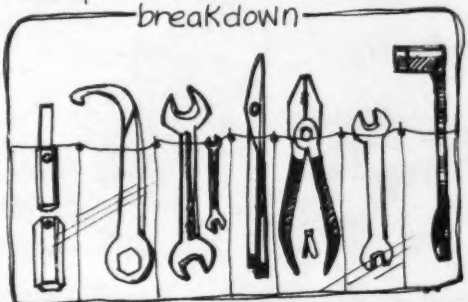
Remember, every pilot does a pre-flight check on the airplane. Well, you will be flying low on your bike. So, for **SAFETY'S SAKE** do a pre-flight before you take off!

10.

WHAT TO CARRY WITH YOU

1. the owner's manual - for time and money saving advice

2. your complete tool kit in case of a breakdown



3. spare parts -
   spark plugs, fuses and a tire repair kit

11.

WHEN YOU ARE RIDING ON A ROAD

1. Look for rocks, chuck holes, tree limbs and other hazards.

2. **WATCH OUT** - Don't lose your head on clotheslines and hidden wires.

3. Keep your head up, eyes moving so you can see hazards in the road ahead of time.

4. If you see something in the road, a hole, an oil slick - go around it, **NOT** over it.

5. Slow down before you get to the hazard by braking or gearing down.

6. Try **NOT** to brake or down shift while you are going through a rough or slippery place. **THIS SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE YOU GET TO THE HAZARD**

7. Slow down **BEFORE** going into a curve. Braking while going around a curve is very risky!

8. **KEEP ALERT** - to hazards, other cars, motorcycles, children, dogs and cats. Road riding is usually fast riding. You must watch out all the time!

12.

WHEN YOU ARE TRAIL RIDING

1. Learn trail riding from an expert.
2. When you are just beginning, START SLOWLY. Avoid very rough places until you know your machine and what it can do. UNTIL YOU KNOW YOURSELF AND WHAT YOU CAN DO!!
3. Learn how to handle your bike in SAND, MUD and WATER.
4. Learn how to handle your bike on GRAVEL, DIRT and ROCKS - EVEN ICE!!
5. Learn how to handle your bike in ALL KINDS OF WEATHER AND ROAD AND TRAIL CONDITIONS!
6. KEEP ALERT - to dangerous hazards, other riders and animals.

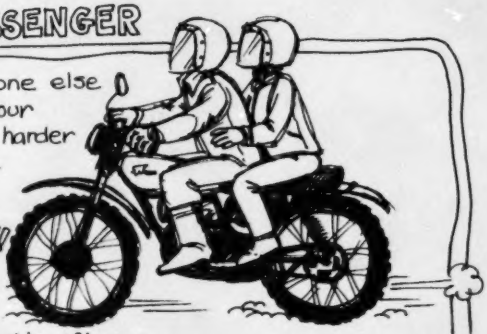
13.

CARRYING A PASSENGER

When you have someone else riding on the back of your motorbike, the bike is harder to balance and control.

ESPECIALLY FOR BEGINNING RIDERS!!

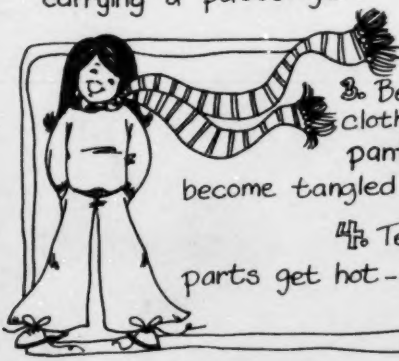
The chances of having an accident are even greater if the **RIDER** has not had a chance to ride often.



YOU MUST TEACH YOUR RIDER WHAT TO DO!

1. You should only take a passenger on a motorcycle that is made for two people - with a second set of foot pegs and a seat big enough for two!

2. Be sure the shock absorbers are set for carrying a passenger.



3. Be sure the passenger's clothing such as shoelaces, pant legs or scarves cannot become tangled in the chain or spokes.

4. Tell the passenger which parts get hot - exhaust pipes and mufflers.

5. NEVER LET A PASSENGER RIDE SIDE SADDLE.

6. Start the motor before the passenger gets on.

7. Tell the person that they must lean when you do and NOT lean away from the turn.

A LEANING PASSENGER CAN STEER THE MOTORCYCLE!!

8. When you speed up or slow down, both you and the passenger should lean forward a little.

9. THE PASSENGER SHOULD HOLD ON- to your waist or to the passenger handholds.

10. The passenger should Keep his or her feet on the foot pegs at all times.

11. The extra weight of a passenger means it will take longer to slow down or stop. Give yourself extra time to slow down or stop.

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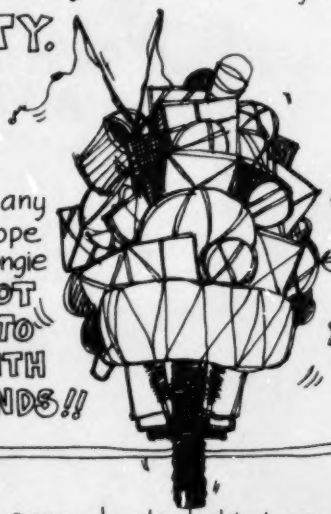
OTHER LOADS - When you carry packages, camping supplies or any kind of load you must think about **SAFETY.**



1. Tie down any loads with rope or elastic bungie cord. **DO NOT HANG ON TO LOADS WITH YOUR HANDS!!**

2. Only carry large loads if you have a luggage rack.

3. Be sure to balance the load right and left.

4. Only carry loads behind you so they will not change the steering and handling of your motorcycle.

5. After you load up, ride around and check the difference in steering, turning and braking. **EVEN A SMALL LOAD CHANGES THE WAY YOUR MACHINE HANDLES!!**

6. **DO NOT OVERLOAD YOUR MOTORCYCLE!!**

7. Be careful not to leave loose ends hanging. They might get caught in the spokes or chain.

8. With extra weight you might have to adjust the chain.

16.

DANGER!!

Wheelies! Skid! Animals!
Speed (too much)! Wind (gusts)!
Sudden Wobble! Blowouts!

If you want to risk your neck doing stunts on a bike, go somewhere where there is no danger of hurting anyone else or their property - AND TAKE SOMEONE WITH YOU - SOMEONE BIG ENOUGH TO PICK UP THE PIECES.

Tomfoolery - SHOWING OFF - has no place in your town or village, on streets or paths where other people drive and walk, where little kids play.

When you take your motorbike out into the open country, KNOW THE TERRITORY! And if you are not familiar with the trail, GO SLOWLY! You can be in real trouble if you are injured miles out from anywhere.

For this reason:

1. Never go alone.
2. Tell someone at home where you are going and when you will be back.
3. Check your oil and gas. BE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH!
4. If you are going from one village to another, be sure you tell someone at the other end when to expect you!

17.

THE 3-WHEELER

Another kind of Motorbike found in many villages is the Three Wheeler.

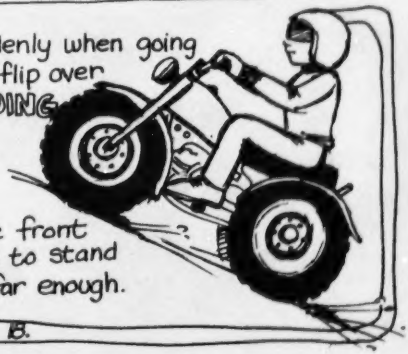
The controls and engine of a three wheeler are mostly the same as other bikes --- **BUT** riding it is quite different !!

Here are some of the things to watch out for:

1. The Three Wheeler has two back wheels, so **TURNING** is harder. You can't lean into the turn as well. **IT JUST TAKES A DIFFERENT KIND OF SKILL! TURNING MUST BE PRACTICED AT SLOW SPEEDS.** It is easy to skid and lose control if you do it wrong. The rider must learn to shift his/her weight and control the throttle to turn.

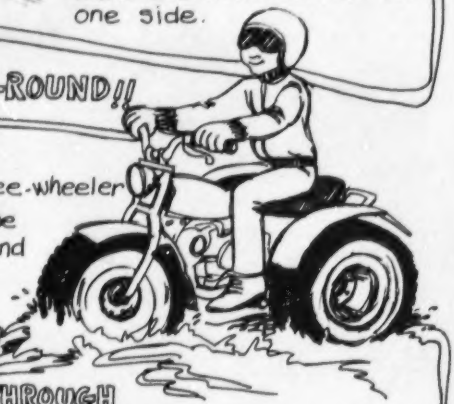
2. **DO NOT** speed up suddenly when going up a hill! The machine can flip over backward. **PRACTICE GOING UP HILLS AT SLOW SPEEDS !!**

When you go up a hill, lean forward to keep the front wheel down. You may have to stand on the foot pegs to lean far enough.

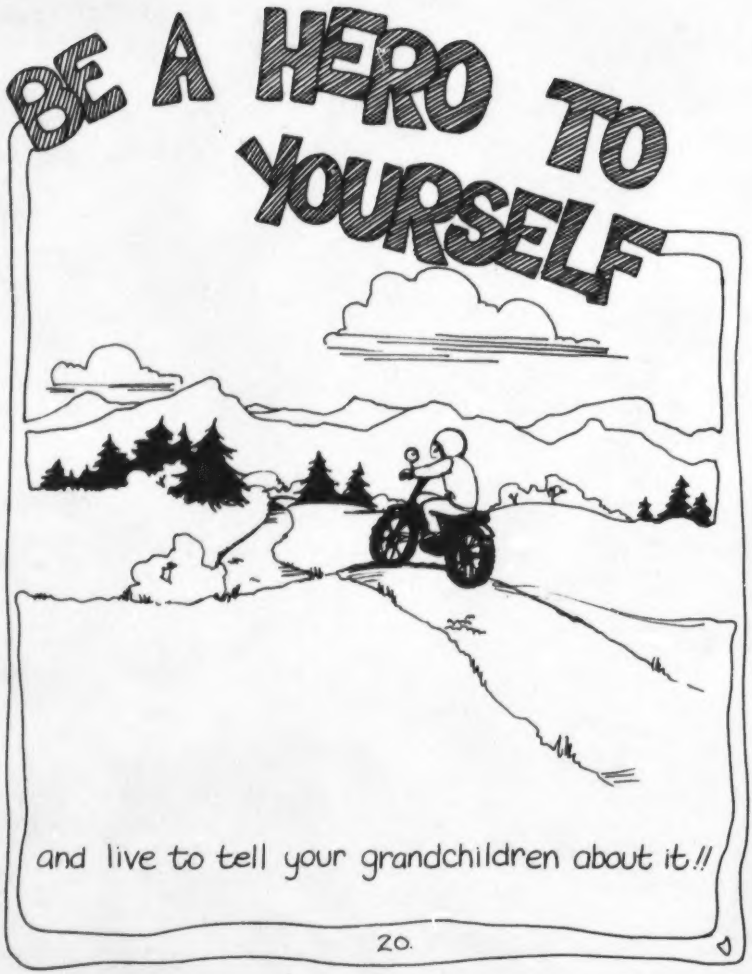


Get a running start in the right gear for the hill.
ACCELERATE BEFORE YOU GET THERE - then climb at a steady rate of speed.
WARNING!!!! DON'T TRY TO TURN ON A STEEP HILL UNLESS YOU HAVE MASTERED TURNING ON LEVEL GROUND!!!!
If you lose forward speed and can't go further GET OFF AND PUSH THE MACHINE BY HAND!!

3. GOING DOWN HILLS
When going down hill - sit back on the seat and gear down.
IT IS BEST TO GO DIRECTLY DOWN THE HILL!
Try not to go on angles that make the machine lean to one side.
NEVER RIDE FAST ON UNKNOWN GROUND!!



4. CROSSING WATER
The tires of a three-wheeler hold a lot of air. If the water is deep... you and your machine may float. THIS MAKES YOU LOSE CONTROL!
AFTER YOU RIDE THROUGH WATER ANY TIME.. CHECK YOUR BRAKES!!!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